

Snake Hill Wildlife Management Area and Forest Management Activities

- Snake Hill Wildlife Management Area (WMA) comprises 3,092 acres which lies along the Cheat River in Monongalia and Preston Counties. The property is owned and managed by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WVDNR), Wildlife Resources Section.
- The State acquired the surface rights with a timber reservation on 2,000 acres in 1996 for \$1,975,166 which included an \$800,000 legislative appropriation during the Governor Caperton Administration. The additional \$1,175,166 which funded the original 2,000 acre acquisition came from WVDNR hunting and fishing license funds and conservation stamp proceeds. The timber reservation which Allegheny Wood Products held on the property expired on February 14, 2009, and subsequently timber ownership has reverted to the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources. An additional 1,092 acres of property was acquired from the Conservation Fund in 2004 utilizing WVDNR hunting and fishing license funds and conservation stamp proceeds.
- The ESH #1 Timber Sale, which is currently being harvested, is 115 acres in size (comprises less than 4% of WMA) and is made up of nine cutting units. Five units have residual leave trees designated with variable retention and deferment cutting methods being applied. Four units, which exhibit advanced oak regeneration, will be clearcut to promote oak regeneration. The entire sale area was previously logged approximately 6-10 years ago by Allegheny Wood Products utilizing a diameter limit cut. All skid roads and log landings are pre-existing and are being utilized during current logging operations. Landings and critical areas will be seeded with wildlife-friendly seed mixes.
- As outlined in WV Natural Resources Laws (§20-2-1) - "It is declared to be the public policy of the State of West Virginia that the wildlife resources of this State shall be protected for the use and enjoyment of all citizens of this State. All species of wildlife shall be maintained for values which may be intrinsic or ecological or of benefit to man. Such benefits shall include (1) hunting, fishing and other diversified recreational uses; (2) economic contributions in the best interests of the people of this State; and (3) scientific and educational uses." Forest management which includes the use of commercial timber sales utilizing various silvicultural techniques is necessary for the WVDNR to meet our agency's mission. The forest management practices implemented throughout this timber sale area will help improve forage and habitat for species such as white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, woodcock and Appalachian cottontails. Also, the early successional forested habitat created by this timber sale will improve feeding, nesting and escape cover for several non-game species, including many songbirds—many of which have experienced significant population declines in the past 50 years. WVU-wildlife graduate students will be monitoring the sale area for the

presence of golden-winged warblers, a species of special concern. The vast majority of the state's wildlife management areas, including the Snake Hill WMA, lack "young forest" habitat which is required by numerous species of wildlife. Subsequently, the WVDNR, Wildlife Resources Section, as well as many other State Fish and Wildlife Agencies throughout the Northeast, has prioritized the creation of early successional forested habitat on their public lands.

- The Director has the authority to conduct timber sales on state-owned wildlife Management Areas as authorized by WV Natural Resources Laws (§20-1-7). Timber sales on wildlife management areas require numerous steps including Governor's review/approval; State Historical and Preservation Office review/approval; review for rare, threatened and endangered species; timber sale contract review/approval by Attorney General's Office; etc. The WVDNR, Wildlife Resources Section is not required to hold public meetings/tours on proposed timber sales on Wildlife Management Areas.
- The Snake Hill WMA is an ecologically unique area with the steep canyon and gorge associated with the Cheat River and the presence of the federally threatened Flat-spined Three-tooth Land Snail (*Triodopsis platysayoides*). This snail is endemic to the Cheat River Gorge with its present known range to occur along approximately 13 miles of the Cheat River Gorge including the Snake Hill WMA.
- The heavily forested Snake Hill WMA is an important component of West Virginia's public Wildlife Management Area system which supports a wide diversity of floral and faunal species. Although wildlife-associated recreation (i.e., hunting, fishing, trapping, bird watching, etc.) is the primary focus on WMAs, other outdoor recreational activities such hiking and cross country skiing are permitted on the area.
- For additional information regarding this WMA, contact the District Wildlife Biologist at the Farmington DNR District I Office at 304-825-6787.

79°50'30"W

79°50'0"W

79°49'30"W

79°49'0"W

79°48'30"W

Snake Hill Wildlife Management Area Trail Map and Guide

Coordinate System = WGS 84

Cooper's
Rock
State
Forest

